

U. S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service
U. S. Border Patrol – McAllen Sector – Chief Jose E. Garza
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NEWS RELEASE

January 6, 2003

Rio Grande City Station Seizes 1,172 Pounds of Marijuana *Border Patrol Helicopter Spots Suspicious Vehicle*

McALLEN, Texas – Chief Patrol Agent Jose E. Garza announces that Border Patrol Agents of the Rio Grande City Border Patrol Station seized a total of 1,172 pounds of marijuana valued at \$937,600 and arrested the driver of the vehicle after he attempted to elude agents.

Today, Jan. 6, Agents of the Rio Grande City Border Patrol Station were alerted to a suspicious vehicle that was spotted by a Border Patrol pilot. The vehicle was spotted leaving the area of the Rio Grande River near the Paloma Wildlife Refuge. Agents closed in on the suspicious vehicle, a black 1996 GMC Suburban, as the driver abandoned the vehicle near the church in La Rosita, Texas. La Rosita is small community located approximately 8 miles west of Rio Grande City, Texas.

The driver, later identified as a 38-year-old male United States citizen, ran north across Expressway 83. Agents arriving at the scene secured the vehicle and discovered 13 large sugar sacks containing a total of 1,172 pounds of marijuana. Meanwhile, the helicopter pilot maintained a visual on the driver and directed agents to the driver's location. The driver was arrested without incident. The driver and the narcotics were turned over to the United States Customs Service for prosecution.

McAllen Border Patrol Sector's Air Operations consists of 7 helicopters, 3 OH-6's, 3 MD-600N's and 1 Huey. The Sector's air fleet also includes 1 airplane. "These assets prove invaluable to the mission of the United States Border Patrol covering large expanses of McAllen Sector's 17,000 square miles."

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